1: Honigmann K-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

Marriage and Adulthood

581 Marriage in Kaska society is essentially an unformalized contract between two individ-
606 uals, the husband and wife. Only secondarily is it also a relationship between the man and his wife's father, to whom he [illegible] for a certain period of cooperation or bride service. The latter element in the marital relationship appears to be gradually weakening in importance, with marriage becoming solely an interpersonal relationship between two people. Kaska marriage does not build up a set of important reciprocal relations between affinal relatives.

581 Marriage may be regarded as marking the transition from physiological maturity to social adulthood. Although adult economic roles and some measure of adult responsibility have been fastened on the boy and girl by adolescence, it is with marriage that the full burden of economic responsibility descends on the man and woman. Now the curtain is rung down on the carefree pursuit of fun by adolescents. This consideration is important in understanding the conscious motives to delay marriage.* Richard Day explained his reluctance by pointing out his current sexual freedom, which would be hampered by a wife's interference. Eva Ardo said: "I don't want to get married. Too hard time. That man lazy, what I gonna do?" Other informants were content to claim that they were too young to marry.

On the other hand marriage is recognized as the proper way of life. People cannot live comfortably alone. Children are desired but cannot be well brought up without a father. It is also ideally believed that once marriage is entered, it should become a permanent union of one man and one woman. The primary qualities desired of a husband are persistence and ability in hunting and trapping as well as a congenial temperament. A wife is desired who combines skill with attractiveness and modesty. While a man might prefer to marry a virgin, there is little manifest reluctance to marry a girl with sexual experience who has the desirable qualities expected of a wife. A woman who has acquired a reputation for adolescent promiscuity is not regarded as an ideal wife.

582 Police and missionary advice is cited by the Indians to back up the opinion that marriage at too early an age is undesirable. Although a number of marriages have recently been contracted between fifteen or sixteen year old girls and nineteen year old men, opinion holds that neither spouse should be below nineteen or twenty. Another argument maintains that premature marriage (presumably because it would be accompanied by premature sexual intercourse) results in a loss of blood and early aging. It is apparent that governmental and religious agents are attempting to discourage early marriage with the cooperation of Indians. Nevertheless, native attitudes disapproving of early unions are often ignored in practice.

Besides being governed by the principle of moiety exogamy, marriage is forbidden between any relatives closer than cousins and any cousins other than a girl's paternal cross-cousin and, complementarily, a boy's maternal cross-cousin. The marriage of such cross-cousins is regarded as preferable. Several existing marriages also reveal an approved pattern in which two sisters marry two brothers. Marriage with a white man is permitted and sometimes encouraged. Hesitation is sometimes expressed toward marriage outside of the part-

* Compare Paterson, Holding Back to Cross Communications (1948).

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

All of these conflicts lead to anxiety and derived hostility, which further threaten the self-assertive as well as deferent motivations. These conflicts find expression in the ambivalence characterizing the emotional relations of men and women in Kaska society. Illustrations of this ambivalence will now be studied as it manifests itself in male feelings of superiority, men's and women's attitudes toward marriage, in folklore, and in men's unconscious use of sex for aggression. Because of closer work with men, it is inevitable that the illustrations should primarily reflect male ambivalence to women; on the other hand, it is also possible that a woman's frustrations, because of her greater opportunity to relax from self-assertion, her early training in passivity, and her cross-sexed identification with her father in childhood, are less strong than a man's.

Male feelings of superiority to women are expressed when men generalize from their important economic roles on the one hand to a notion of generally superior status. They are also revealed in Old Man's defensive claim that men can, if necessary, do many feminine tasks, like caring for children, making babiche, lacing snowshoes, and cutting moccasins. On another occasion, however, Old Man reported that such tasks were only regretfully performed by men and their necessity considered a hardship. River Joe, too, often complained about a man's difficulties when he lacked a woman to cook and care for the camp. We therefore conclude that Old Man's statement of male self-sufficiency has little basis in manifest behavior and is an expression of male superiority. It represents an attempt to deny the anxiety provoked by dependence on his wife.

Both sexes reveal conscious reluctance to marriage. In men, holding back is defended on grounds of sexual freedom, while in women it is rationalized as a fear of being economically frustrated or physically overworked. Avoidance of marriage may be interpreted both as a fear of the strong emotions that the bond develops and of the dependency which it invites. The period of premarital promiscuity, as we shall see, affords abundant opportunity to satisfy sexuality without too seriously threatening emotional isolation. Furthermore, sex in this period offers full opportunity to express self-assertion, while marriage, with its burdens of economic responsibilities and child care, threatens to tax that motivation in both sexes.

The expression of sexual ambivalence in folklore is illustrated in the story of "The Blind Old Man," selected by Old Man to unburden the anxiety and hostility engendered by his growing dependency.[39] The theme of the tale, an old man deceived by his wife who withholds food, strongly suggests the husband-wife relationship to be marked by distrust and ambivalence. That the woman is able to deceive her husband, shows her to be perceived in a position of superiority and power, which throws light on the man's intense and conflictful emotional dependence. A second tale reveals a similar theme.

THE GIRL WHO TURNED INTO AN OWL

Two brothers shared a wife and lived with their mother-in-law. One day the girl climbed a tree to reach an owl's nest and was turned into an owl. Her clothes drifted down to her mother, who donned them and returned to camp pretending to be the young wife. She placed a roll of blankets in her camp to simulate an old woman asleep. When the boys came home the woman fed them, but as she had no teeth she could only eat tripe. To give the sound of chewing, she put a

[39] See the discussion of Old Man's personality below, pp. 327-328.

Strength and endurance, especially in men, were considered very desirable and of more importance than the stature and shape of body. Tall men were considered good looking, but not equal to short men for strength and endurance. Some tall men were very good walkers but short men were better than tall men as workers and packers. They could carry heavier loads without becoming fatigued. Men who were skilful hunters, good-tempered and of kindly disposition were most desired by women. These qualities were more considered by women than good looks, etc. Some men considered a light smooth skin preferable to fine features. Some would say, "That woman has a beautiful face and fine features but her skin is too rough". It is said that women (or all persons) of the Raven phratry had rougher skins than women or people of the Wolf phratry. This is said to be owing to their descent from Big Raven who like the raven bird had rough skin, especially on the legs. A very wide head or a very flat nose was considered ugly. People having these features were said to resemble slaves. A man would say of a wide-face, flat-nosed person, "That woman is ugly; she resembles a slave".

SUBSISTENCE--VARIETIES AND PREPARATION OF FOOD

The food of the Tahltan consisted of flesh of animals and of fish supplemented by some vegetable food during the summer season. Animal flesh especially was the chief subsistence of the tribe, but fish was also important. In comparison with the Plateau Tribes the use of roots and berries was insignificant. Shell fish taken from salt or fresh water were not eaten. It is said they were fairly abundant in one large lake near the head of Nass River, but in all other parts of the Tahltan country were exceedingly scarce. There were no domestic animals excepting the dog, and no agriculture was practised, except for a period of years the cultivation of tobacco.

The flesh of the following animals was considered good food; the caribou, moose, buffalo, sheep, goat, bear (of all kinds), lynx, beaver, marmot, porcupine, ground squirrels, and hare or rabbit.

Tree squirrels and muskrats were eaten occasionally especially if food was scarce but they were not considered very good food. Squirrels did not have enough fat.

support his uncle's widow.

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If a man's uncle had a young wife but he himself was old and had become too poor to support his wife properly, he might say to his nephew, "Henceforth you will look after and support my wife. She will be the same as your wife". The nephew then supported his uncle's wife and after her husband's death she became his wife in reality even although he had a wife already. Etiquette or custom required that a man and his mother-in-law should not speak to each other. The mother-in-law avoided her son-in-law as much as possible. She did not speak to him directly not even meet him if she could help it. If she met him on a trail, she turned her back so as not to see him until he passed. It is said the speaking to each other of mothers-in-law and sons-in-law was also tabooed among the Tlingit.

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The following were beliefs regarding marriage and procreation:

1. It was believed marrying generally changed a person's luck. A man who was unlucky or a poor hunter often became lucky or a good hunter after marriage. Also the reverse was sometimes the case. The change after marriage was due to the man's wife. A man might get a lucky woman or an unlucky one for his wife and this effected the man's luck for good or evil. Some men were not influenced this way after marriage.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
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838 sought young men as sexual partners, with whom he secured orgasm by opposing the glans of the penes. In the morning the homosexual rewarded his lovers with gifts, treating them "just as good as women." Although dressing as a man, the homosexual removed his clothing during sexual relations. Once he tried to secure anal intromission with a sleeping man who had been eating fat and who defecated against his would-be seducer. Female homosexuals simulated copulation by "getting on top of each other." Such women were often transvestites, but no male transvestites could be recalled. Sometimes if a couple had too many female children and desired a son to hunt for them in later years, they selected a daughter to be "like a man."[30] When she was about five year's old the parents tied the dried ovaries of a bear to her inner belt. She wore this amulet for the rest of her life in order to avoid conception. The girl was raised as a boy. She dressed in masculine attire and performed male allocated tasks, often developing great strength and usually becoming an outstanding hunter. She screamed and broke the bow and arrows of any boy who made sexual advances to her. "She knows that if he gets her then her luck with game will be broken." Apparently such a girl entered homosexual relationships.

839 Behavior corresponding to sexual sadism, masochism, and exhibitionism could not be recalled. Mentally ill women and old men sometimes publicly revealed their genitals. Voyeurs received a scolding but were not physically punished. Animal contacts occurred only rarely. Necrophilia appears to have been totally incompatible with the prevailing attitudes toward the dead, an interpretation concurred in by our informant.[31]

832 *Dease River Kaska.* Love songs constituted a means of winning girls' favors and also
833 possessed magical properties designed to create favorable attitudes toward the wooer.
838 In coitus the woman lay on her back. Cunnilinctus was denied but a rare woman
839 performed fellatio as a preliminary to intercourse. Berdaches were unknown but the informant agreed that both male and female homosexuality sometimes occurred. Homosexual men engaged in sodomy, oral contacts being carefully avoided. Two women achieved orgasm through clitoral friction. An upper Liard River informant reported a case in which some Dease River youths who had killed a cow moose copulated with the animal, an act blamed for the subsequent depopulation of the Dease basin.

MARRIAGE

581 *Upper Liard Kaska.* Ideally marriages were for permanency and a man who tried to
586 leave his wife would be urged by the community to reconsider his decision. Despite these ideal attitudes divorce was common.

581 A man sought a wife "to dry meat for him," sew clothing, cook his meals, and perform
[585] the many other services culturally allocated to women. Marriage brought a youth a certain increment in prestige, marking as it did the transition to adulthood. It promised

[30] In Montenegro and other Balkan countries it was not uncommon for a girl to swear virginity and occupy the role of a son in a family without boys. Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans* (1928), 211.

[31] See below, p. 137. Thus do cultures limit the scope of deviation. See Mead, *Male and Female* (1949), 147.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

children, and when he realized this promise another reward accrued to the husband. Not only did marriage provide a dependable source of sexual gratification but a young man secured his reputation in the community when he no longer had to "bother" girls or other men's wives in order to obtain such satisfaction. On the other side, women welcomed marriage for its economic rewards, like an abundance of food and skins for clothing, as well as for sexual opportunities and the children that might follow.

Boys married around the age of 18; that is, when they were old enough to meet the primary qualification of a husband, namely, to be able to earn a living by hunting. Girls married when about 16 years old or shortly after menarche. An older brother ideally took a bride before his junior but an elder sibling's prerogatives were not so great that parents interfered with a younger brother's marriage plans. While great disparity between the ages of spouses sometimes occurred, it was never happily regarded. Public opinion maintained that because an old man could not make his living as easily as a younger man he could not expect to marry a young wife. The union of a mature woman and a young man received more tolerance but even then "much talk" might follow. Men incapable of making a living by hunting, or those who enjoyed the reputation for stinginess (they "try to hold on to meat and not share it; they hunt alone") sometimes never married. Also there were men who resembled the women previously described and showed little interest in women or sex. They too refrained from marrying.

Blood relatives as close as parallel cousins of the second and third generation came under the incest taboos as did members of the same matrilineal moiety. Marriage to a maternal cross cousin was preferred. Other unions were frequently concluded by sister exchange. Marriage outside of the tribe (macrocosmic group) was not too well regarded. People from abroad, it was felt, could rarely be trusted. Also intertribal marriage might lead to trouble in cases where the members of such a group learned about some mistreatment suffered by one of the outmarrying persons. Marriage to captive women certainly had a place, single men regarding the war party as an opportunity to secure a wife. If the defeated group happened to recognize moiety distinctions a warrior took only a woman of the opposite exogamous division. The initial treatment of captive wives was apt to be harsh but warmer relations usually followed the birth of children. Married men never secured additional spouses through war. Women objected strenuously to sharing a man with anyone but a closely related co-wife.* What appears to have been literal bride purchase obtained in unusual circumstances, as when a rich man negotiated for the daughter of a poor family. In return he paid clothing, other valuables, and presumably continued to supply food to his parents-in-law. Such a marriage was not highly esteemed.

Generally a period of bride service, lasting as long as two years, preceded marriage. During this interval a young man supplied meat, skins, and wood for the family of his intended bride, sometimes without directly announcing his intentions to the parents. His plans were probably well understood and he usually enjoyed sexual relations with the girl of his choice. Ideally the period of bride service allowed a youth to demonstrate

* But among the Sarsi a captive woman was said to have made an excellent co-wife. Honigmann, *Changes in Sarsi Social Culture* (manuscript).